



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
MATERIALS TRANSPORTATION BUREAU

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

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Office of Hazardous Materials Operations  
[ 49 CFR Part 178 ]

[Docket No. HM-140; Notice No. 76-6]

SHIPPING CONTAINER SPECIFICATIONS

Notice of Proposed Rulemaking; DOT  
Specification 17H Modification

The Materials Transportation Bureau (MTB) is considering an amendment to Part 178 of the Department's Hazardous Materials Regulations pertaining to the minimum thickness of the removable head of a 55-gallon capacity, DOT specification 17H steel drum. The Bureau proposes to change the minimum thickness of the removable head from 16-gauge to 18-gauge.

The Bureau had previously received two applications requesting exemptions from the minimum thickness requirements specified for certain components of a DOT-17H steel drum. One application requested the use of an 18-gauge removable head on a 55-gallon capacity, DOT-17H steel drum. The specification requires a 16-gauge removable head for a drum of this capacity. The other application requested the use of a 20-gauge body and bottom head on a 30 gallon capacity, DOT 17H, steel drum. The specification requires an 18-gauge body and bottom head for a drum of this capacity. The applications were denied because adequate justification was not provided.

The Bureau is proposing a reduction in the minimum thickness of the removable top head of a 55-gallon capacity, DOT-17H drum because a further review of the performance test results and of the specification thickness requirements of the heads of the drum indicate that further study is warranted.

One feature of the DOT 17H specification, as well as other DOT packaging specifications, that is not related to a performance test is puncture resistance. This aspect is addressed only by gauge thickness specifications. In the case of the 55-gallon capacity drum, the bottom head may be constructed of 18-gauge steel. Therefore, the Bureau believes there is no basis for the requirements of the removable head to be continued at 16-gauge for purposes of puncture resistance. Accordingly, the Bureau proposes to change the specification requirements of the 55 gallon capacity, DOT-17H drum to authorize the same gauge for the removable head that is specified for the bottom head.

The proper mating of removable heads to drums is essential to assure compliance with specification requirements.

Such mating, adequate to prevent leakage, is accomplished by the assembly of the removable head to the drum body in conjunction with the use of a gasket and a locking ring.

The Bureau anticipates comments expressing concern that a 12-gauge bolted ring with drop forged lugs and a  $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch bolt or an approved equally efficient closure, as specified in § 178.118-8, will not be suitable in conjunction with an 18-gauge removable head. This is a valid concern; however, such a concern may also be applicable to a 16- or 14-gauge removable head. The Bureau would welcome a discussion of this subject in the comments it receives to this notice.

The impacts of this proposal, if adopted have been reviewed and it has been determined in accord with procedures for considering inflationary impacts (E.O. 11821, OMB Circular A-107, and DOT Order 2050.4), that an inflationary Impact Statement is not required.

In consideration of the foregoing, it is proposed to amend 49 CFR 178.118-6 by revising footnote 3 following the table in paragraph (a) to read as follows:

§ 178.118-6 Parts and dimensions.

(a) . . .

\* 18-gauge authorized provided there are one or more corrugations in the removable head near the periphery.

Interested persons are invited to give their views on this proposal. Communications should identify the docket number and be submitted (five copies) to the Section of Dockets, Office of Hazardous Materials Operations, Department of Transportation, Washington, D.C. 20590. Communications received on or before November 30, 1976 will be considered before final action is taken on this proposal. All comments received will be available for examination by interested persons at the Office of Hazardous Materials Operations, Room 6500 Trans Point Building, 2100 Second Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. both before and after the closing date for comments.

((49 U.S.C. 1804), 49 CFR 1.53(e) and paragraph (a) (4) of App. to Part 102.)

Issued in Washington, D.C. on September 20, 1976.

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Hazardous Materials Operations.

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